

Using the FamilySearch Catalog

Objective: At the end of this lesson, you should be able to use the FamilySearch Catalog in your research.

The FamilySearch Catalog is one of the most important resources when conducting your family history research. The catalog provides you with information about the records, books, microfilm, microfiche, and computer databases available from FamilySearch.

To search the catalog, there are eight different types of search options that you can conduct. You can either search using a single option or multiple search options.

1. Places

One of the most frequently used searches is the **Places** search. This search is used to find records on different jurisdictional levels. These levels will change and vary dependent upon the country you are researching. The most common levels that you will find are **City, Town, County, State, Department, Province, and Country**. You may need to check all jurisdictional levels when searching for records.

The **Places** search is an exact search. As you start to type, a dropdown box appears and will try to predict the location you are entering. You must select the correct option in the dropdown menu for it to work.

2. Surnames

The **Surnames** search is helpful in finding published family histories and other compiled works that include a specific surname. This search works best if you have an uncommon surname. For common surnames like Jones, Smith, or Williams, the **Keywords** search will work better. It also does not include surname variants. When searching for surnames and family histories, try searching spelling variants.

3. Titles

The **Titles** search will search the items entered in the title field. It will search all collections, not only books. You do not need to search by the exact title.

4. Author

The **Author** search will search the items entered in the author's field. The field may contain information about the book's author, repository, or agency that created the collection.

5. Subjects

The **Subjects** search will search through the subjects' field. This search is based on the Library of Congress subjects: Native Races, Nationalities, Occupations, Religious Groups and Languages, World History, Geography, Political Science, Law, Fine Arts, Medicine, Military and Naval Science, and more. This search may not always be successful.

6. Keywords

The **Keywords** search is the most versatile search in the catalog. This search is not limited to a single field on the catalog page. It searches through the entire page searching your keywords. A **Keyword** search can help in locating authors, subjects, and other sources when not all the words are known. This is also a great way to combine the other types of searches.

7. Call Number

The **Call Number** search is to search for books that can be found at selected FamilySearch Centers and the FamilySearch Library. You do not need the full call number to conduct a search. The more you know of a call number the more likely you will locate the book you are searching for.

8. Film/Fiche/Image Group Number (DGS)

The **Film/Fiche/Image Group Number (DGS)** search is used to locate a film. This is an exact number search. You will not be able to do a partial search.